

REMARKS

35 U.S.C. § 102/103

Claims 1-7 and 10-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ecktman et al (USP 5,201,500). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

In response to the Applicants arguments, it is stated that the argument is more specific than the claim language and that the phrase “integrally formed” means, according to Webster’s Dictionary, “composed of integral parts”, and thus Ecktman’s retainer meets the meaning of “integrally formed” because the retainer is composed of integral parts 12 and 20.

Applicant vigorously objects to this line of reasoning. The Webster’s Dictionary definition of “integral” relied upon by the Examiner defines “integral” as “composed of integral parts.” This is circular reasoning and never defines “integral” in any words other than itself. The first definition of “integral” is “essential to completeness”. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines “integral” also as “formed as a unit with another part” and when defining “integral” as “composed of integral parts” it suggests “integrated.” The most applicable definition of “integrated” being “to form or blend into a whole.”

Thus taking integrated as “forming into a whole” and with the word “formed” meaning ‘to shape, mold, or make’, Applicant’s recitation of an “integrally formed” does mean that the two parts are formed as a single unit, and Applicants argument is not more specific than the claim language.

Regardless, this line of argument is now moot due to the amendment to claim 1. Claim 1 recites that the retainer has a centrally located bumper contact surface formed as part of the retainer. Ecktman fails to teach forming the retainer with such a centrally located bumper surface.

As Ecktman et al. fails to anticipate the invention as recited in claims, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Regarding newly submitted claims 16-20, no portion of the retainer of Ecktman is capable of contacting the opposing retainer when the airspring is collapsed. Regarding claim 20, Ecktman very clearly teaches the use of a separately formed and applied bumper.

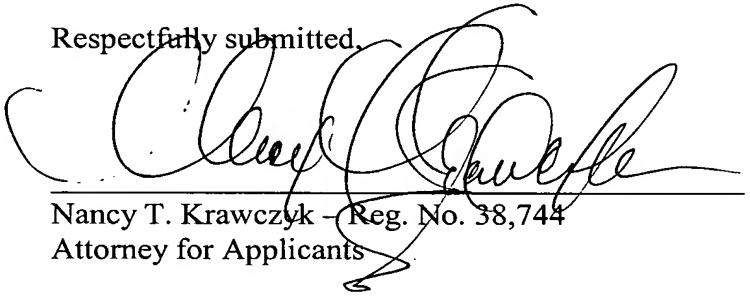
35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ecktman et al. in view of Koschinat et al. (USP 4,890,823). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

This rejection is based on the 102/103 rejection of Ecktman. As previously argued, one skilled in the art would not have found it obvious to form the bumper 20 and plate 12 as a single item.

In light of this amendment, all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application are allowable. Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to allow all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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